

SHARKBITES

Buena Vista
MUSEUM
of Natural History & Science

2018 Chester Avenue
Bakersfield, Ca 93301
(661) 324-6350
buenvistamuseum.org

Spring / Summer 2021



BVM REOPENS

Come and See What's New!

Featured Article

Tim Elam - Historic Kern Gold Prospecting

Upcoming Events

"Wacky Science" with Dave Hanley

"Geology & Hollywood" with Dr. Gregg Wilkerson



**BVM Acquires
New Titanosaur
Femur!**

Museum Hours: Thursday-Saturday 10am-4pm and Sunday 12pm-4pm.



A Note From the Director...



Koral Hancharick
Executive Director

PANDEMIC! FIRE! and MURDER HORNETS! OH, MY!

Dear Friends of the Museum,

WOW! What a year it has been! I am so pleased to announce that the MUSEUM IS OPEN! May 1st, the museum returned to regular hours. It is wonderful to see some normalcy coming back, to see visitors, members and volunteers again. During the past 15 months, the museum faced many challenges, many learning experiences and things we never imagined would happen in the 21st century! In addition to the pandemic, there were many other hurdles tossed into the museum's path of reopening. The downtown fire of December 2020 burned four neighboring businesses to the south. We keep positive thoughts for the return of our neighboring businesses as they rebuild. I am very grateful to the Bakersfield Fire Department which saved the museum building, exhibits and displays. However, the museum sustained over \$180,000 in water and smoke damage. It has been a long 5 months of clean up and restoration. I am thankful to the many generous donors who helped cover the expenses that were not covered by insurance and the many volunteers who shared their talents and time. With their generosity, the museum was able to restore, repair and improve all the damaged areas and more.

I encourage you to visit and see the many other improvements made during the pandemic such as fresh paint and revamping the African and Asian animals display, now with an information kiosk. This is the first of many interactives to be installed throughout the museum. A generous donation of a Titanosaur thigh bone was added to the Dinosaurs area. An on-line gift shop is now available, and 32 informative videos for youths and adults can be found at buonavistamuseum.org/videos. Coming soon will be a virtual tour. Also, fun and beautiful security gates now protect the museum front and the back entry.

The board of directors, staff and I are always looking for ways to improve and bring better learning experiences to our community and visitors. If you have a suggestion or idea, please feel free to contact me.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Koral Hancharick

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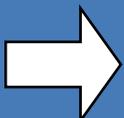
Bakersfield Firefighters working hard to stop the fire downtown in 2020.



BVM's newly revamped African animals exhibit including new digital interactive kiosk.



Special thanks to the Lazzerini Foundation, Jeff Hurley and many others who generously donated towards our new security gates



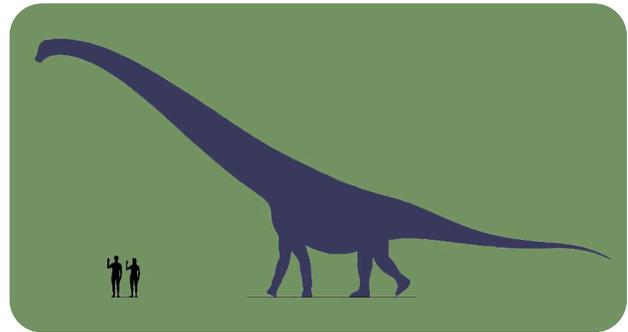
The mission of the Buena Vista Museum is to educate, engage and inspire our community to explore the wonders of science through enrichment activities, exhibits, and special programs

TITANOSAUR!



Museum staff and volunteers carefully work to remove the femur from the crate.

Just prior to reopening, the Buena Vista Museum welcomed an enormous new arrival. Measuring 8 feet long, the femur, or thigh bone, is from a dinosaur called a "titanosaur" that lived from 163 to 145 million years ago from the late Jurassic to the the end of the Cretaceous period. The titanosaurs were the last surviving group of long necked "sauropods," and were still thriving at the time of the extinction event at the end of the Cretaceous period. The titanosaur is one of the largest land animals known to have ever existed! The titanosaur femur is on display now in the dinosaur exhibit on BVM's upper floor.



Titanosaur size compared to humans



The titanosaur femur arrived at the museum in style! Transport, and the substantial effort of unloading, was performed by museum staff and a small army of kind and generous volunteers.



DAVE HANLEY

The titanosaur femur was acquired through a generous donation by Dave Hanley. BVM greatly appreciates Mr. Hanley's contribution as well his constant support for the museum and its mission.



Unknown miner at his stone dugout near Randsburg, CA, ca. 1900 -1920.
From KCET "Desert Gold," via USC Libraries and California Historical Society

HISTORIC KERN COUNTY GOLD PROSPECTING

By **Tim Elam**

The beginning of the State of California is inextricably tied to the discovery of gold. In December, 1848, an American River gold discovery earlier that year was announced by the U.S. President James K. Polk to a joint session of Congress. In 1850, only two years after the American River gold discovery, California became a state. Polk's announcement commenced the greatest non-wartime migration in our nation's history.

The "49er" gold rush brought in dreamers and scalawags from every corner of the globe. Some of them landed in what is now Kern County. Stories of Kern County gold discoverers and the settlements founded because of those discoveries became legendary. Kern County became California's most productive gold producing county outside of the Sierra Nevada "Mother Lode" counties. To date, Kern has produced at least 4.06 million ounces of gold. Because no mining records were kept before 1880, the actual volume of gold produced is likely higher.



Asbury Harpending portrait, 1915.
From *The Bakersfield Californian*

Kern County's first gold was discovered on the Kern River in 1851. Kern River settlements such as Keyesville and Kernville sprung up quickly after 1850's discoveries. But the queen of the Sierra gold camps was Havilah, founded in 1865 after a discovery by Asbury Harpending. Harpending had a sketchy past that included being a failed Confederate pirate on San Francisco Bay. After being granted a pardon from prison at Alcatraz by President Abraham Lincoln in 1864, Harpending came to Kern County not wanting to attract attention. But Harpending's gold discovery led him to found Havilah and make a mint from selling tracts of land in the town. In the typical boom/bust cycle, Havilah began to decline within a few years, and Harpending got out of California around 1870. Harpending was swindled during the 1872 Great Diamond Hoax, an event that fooled the San Francisco banking community. He became a Wall Street banker, and after 1900, he wrote his autobiography. Never prone to understatement, Harpending's autobiography states:

"I was literally chased from absolute

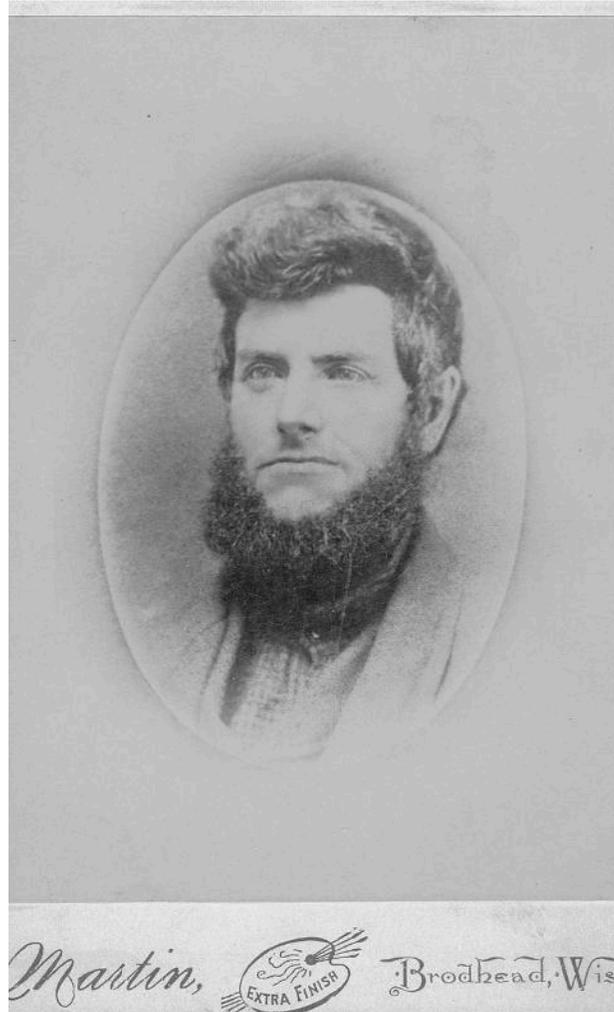
poverty into the pos-session of a million dollars. I discovered a great mining dis-strict and founded a thriving town. And if the matter of paternity is ever brought in court, it will probably be proved to the satisfaction of a jury that I am the father of Kern County."

Kern County Sierra gold mining proved to be largely unprofitable. Prospecting in the late 19th century shifted into Kern's desert. Perhaps as much as \$16,000,000 of gold was discovered in the 1870's near today's Red Rock Canyon. But in 1894/1895, Kern's two richest gold mining areas were discovered at Mojave and Randsburg.

Ezra Hamilton, a "Renaissance Man" with careers as an inventor, carpenter, farmer, brick maker, politician, developer, prospector, and Union soldier was down-on-his-luck after his Los Angeles brick-making factory failed in the 1890's. But he had noticed golden flecks in his brick feedstock clay mined from the Mojave/Rosamond area. Those flecks turned out to be gold, which he traced back to gold ore veins in hard rock. The discovery ushered in a series of profitable mines in old volcanic rock of the western Mojave. Hamilton also got out of the gold mining business in 1908, choosing to found a health spa at Willow Springs. Mining in the western Mojave has persisted erratically ever since. A 2016 re-opening of the Golden Queen Mine has once again turned Kern County into a gold producer.

Kern's most productive gold mining area proved to be in the Rand Mountains in the far northeastern part of Kern County. There, in 1894, gold was discovered by three unlikely partners: Frederic Mooers,

John Singleton, and Charles Burcham. Mooers was a Brooklyn journalist hired to write a story about dying mining camps...but instead got bitten by the gold bug himself. Burcham was a butcher by trade, also with wanderlust for gold. Singleton was a greenhorn to the prospecting world...and a carpenter. Mooers was the leader



Ezra Hamilton portrait, year unknown
Public Domain

of the bunch. After the three wandered away from other desert prospectors, Carpenter discovered gold ore. The three prospectors knew they would have difficulty keeping their discovery secret from nearby prospectors. But the three came up with an ingenious plan. They loaded their wagon with worthless rock and returned to camp and announced their gold discovery. Skeptical, more

experienced prospectors raided their "ore" cart and found the greenhorns had "mistakenly" decided the rock was valuable gold ore. That deception gave the three prospectors a few more days to stake their claims legally, which they did.

Real gold ore was later taken to Los Angeles and assayed to be very rich. The most valuable member of the group turned out to be Burcham's wife, Dr. Rose Burcham. She functioned as a legal assistant and bookkeeper for the new Yellow Aster Mining Co. in 1895. Once the discovery was announced and mining commenced, Dr. Burcham convinced the three miners to not "sell out," as was usually the case. That decision made the three partners very rich. The resultant town became Randsburg...named after the rich Rand Mining District of South Africa. A second town, Johannesburg, was created in 1897 one mile away. Jo'burg was where the railroad stopped. It was intended to be the civilized town, suitable for families, whereas Randsburg was the typical wild and woolly mining town. Johannesburg even possessed a golf course, built before 1900. Like other mining areas, gold production

at Randsburg was intermittent after World War II. The last new ore mined at Randsburg occurred in 2003. Being a 19th century gold prospector in Kern County was a dangerous, lonely existence. But a few struck it rich, and their legendary stories are worth recounting.

BVM Videos



Volunteers in Action



WITH GRATITUDE

In March of 2020, the museum closed its doors to the public, but BVM never stopped working on ways to enrich and engage the community. Volunteers were instrumental over the past year in launching several new programs including videos and live lecture series. Volunteers also assisted with the many new additions and improvements made to the museum during the closure.

We extend our thanks to Dr. Robert Yohe and Dr. Anthony Rathburn who helped the museum inaugurate the new "Meet the Expert" live virtual events. We also express our deepest gratitude to

Tim Elam, John Stegall, John Griffith, Scott Bennett, Dave Hanley and many others who helped to create amazing, engaging content for our new online video series. You can check them out at buonavistamuseum.org/videos.

We are also very grateful to Carol Bowman, Jeff Johnson, Dave Hanley, Steve Montgomery, George Marquez, Sam Sikola, Kristen Hunt, Brittnie Smith, Zakk Luttrell, Cynthia Halstrum, Thomas Salinas and every volunteer who contributed their considerable effort and skill to complete the many additions and enhancements to the museum during the closure.

A very special thank you to the Lazzerini Foundation for their very generous donation allowing the museum to create beautiful and fun security gates adding extra protection to the building and it's irreplaceable contents.

Volunteers are key to the museum's success. If you are interested in supporting the museum's mission with your time and skills, please consider applying at buonavistamuseum.org/volunteer

EVENTS

The restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic have limited the types of events the museum can hold.

As our community begins to reopen, please keep an eye on our online event calendar at buonavistamuseum.org/events



Paleo Digs EVERY SUNDAY IN JUNE

Dig for fossils at Sharktooth Hill, one of the most significant marine fossil sites in the world!

Ernst Quarries will donate a portion of dig fees to Buena Vista Museum for every Sunday dig in June. Support BVM and its programs by scheduling a Sunday dig now at:

sharktoothhillproperty.com.



EVERY THURSDAY

JUNE 24 - AUGUST 12, 1PM-3PM

-In Person Event-

Space is limited, call to reserve **661-324-6350**

Join Science Educator Dave Hanley for a fun trip through the wild side of science. Engaging, hands-on activities provide the basis for learning about everything from rockets to biology to aerodynamics.

**Recommended
ages 8 and above**

**\$10 (includes free child museum admission)
\$6 for BVM Members**

Meet The Expert: Geology

Dr. Gregg Wilkerson Geology and Hollywood

JUNE 17, 5:30PM-6:30PM

-Virtual Online Event-



Earthquakes! Volcanoes! Sandstorms! Canyon hideouts for bad guys! Learn how geology has been depicted in selected movies from 1902 to the present. You will watch film clips with geological motifs as you examine the history of film to understand how the science of geology has developed over the last 117 years alongside a changing American society.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

INDEPENDENCE DAY FIREWORKS FUNDRAISER

JULY 1ST - 4TH

Support Buena Vista Museum by purchasing your fireworks this year from our fireworks booth located in the East Hills Target parking lot on Mall View Road.



JOIN US

Our members are kind of a big deal!

Members help support the mission of BVM to educate, engage, and inspire our community to explore the wonders of science through enrichment activities, exhibits, and special programs.

Join now at buenavistamuseum.org/memberships

- **Free** admission to the museum
- **Free** entry to our regular-admission priced educational programs like our "Just for Kids" events and monthly science talks.
- **Free** admission to over 600 ASTC participating museums worldwide! (www.astc.org)
- **Free or discounted** admission to 12 other reciprocal and local museums and zoos
- **Eligibility** to participate in Paleo-Digs at Sharktooth Hill
- **\$10 discount** per Science Camp session your child enrolls in
- **Discounts** on other museum events and in our museum store.

TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH

Your gift of any amount helps to support BVM's mission.

Thank you for your generosity!

[Donate Now](http://buenavistamuseum.org/donate)

buenavistamuseum.org/donate

WISH LIST

Improvements and Operational Needs

- Drywall for hall stairwell
- New flooring for the Oh Zone
- Back steps to the museum finished with non-skid coating
- Updated library and object cataloging software
- 10 six ft. long plastic folding tables

Monthly Needs

- Windex, cleaning supplies, lysol, etc.
- Office supplies, pencils, pens, etc.

Projects and Goals

- Open a new "just for kids" science lab containing a make-it-take-it station. This will be a place where children and parents, along with BVM science experts, will be able to think critically, experiment, create and make fun projects.
- Bring new, creative and hands-on STEM items into our science discovery center, the Oh Zone and Explore-it Zone

If you can make any of our wish list items come true or need more details and cost of projects, please contact Executive Director Koral Hancharick at (661) 324-6350

VISIT BVM'S ONLINE MUSEUM STORE

Shop our exclusive fossil guides, books, apparel, rocks and minerals, STEM kits and more!



Shop now at: buenavistamuseum.org/museumstore



For more info visit
astc.org

Have you heard?

In addition to your regular membership benefits, **your membership also includes the "ASTC Passport"** which gives you free and discounted access to over 600 museums and science centers world wide!



BVM provides discounted admission for those currently receiving SNAP food assistance benefits. Simply present your valid EBT card and photo ID at the front desk for \$2 admission each for up to 4 individuals per EBT card.



BVM is a Blue Star Museum which means we offer free admission to the nation's active duty military personnel including National Guard and Reserve and their families.

You shop. Amazon gives.

Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase to the charitable organization of your choice.

Support Buena Vista Museum by selecting us at smile.amazon.com



CONSIDER A DONATION

BVM is looking ahead to exciting goals and growth we have planned, and we want you to be a part of our future! Current goals include returning to a rich menu of in-house programming to offer visitors during regular museum hours. We are also currently seeking sponsorship for new, kid-friendly, high-tech exhibits!

BVM's **average year operating expenses are about \$184,000 per year, or about \$15,335 a month, or approximately \$500 per day.** No donation is too small; in the end it all adds up! Your continued support is what enables the museum to serve our community by offering such a rich variety of educational programs for children and people of all ages.

*****cut and detach*****

Name _____ E-mail _____

Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

____ Enclosed is my donation for the **General Operations** in the amount of \$ _____

____ Enclosed is my donation to **Sponsor A Day at the Museum** for \$500

Date: _____ or In memory of : _____

____ Enclosed is my donation in support of many **Educational programs** \$ _____

____ Enclosed is my donation in support of **Exhibit Acquisitions and improvements** \$ _____

____ I would like to **pledge** on a monthly basis \$ _____

____ I would like to receive pre-addressed monthly pledge envelopes.

____ Please charge the above amount to my credit card # _____

Name on Card _____ Expiration date _____

Signature _____

Please contact me at Ph # _____ Best time to call _____

____ I would like to be a volunteer. Please send me an application and more information.

Please mail to **BVM, 2018 Chester Ave, Bakersfield, CA. 93301 USA**

You can also call **661-324-6350** or donate online at the link below.

[Donate Online](#)

buonavistamuseum.org/donate

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

DIAMOND

Tim & Pat
Elam



Virginia and Alfred Harrell Foundation



GOLD

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Pat & Michele

Jeff Johnson

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Sampson

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Waterman
Foundation



Kern Community
Foundation



Kern County
Superintendent
of Schools



MUSEUM HOURS

THURSDAY - SATURDAY

10:00am - 4:00pm

SUNDAY

12:00pm - 4:00pm

www.buenavistamuseum.org

WE'RE OPEN!

2018 CHESTER AVENUE
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301



EMAIL: INFO@BUENAVISTAMUSEUM.ORG

PHONE: 661-324-6350

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